

By LTBB Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program Team

As community drug court team members, we are constantly being educated on the ever expanding range of ways for individuals to "get high" or alter their moods. Usually, we are not surprised when we hear stories about new emerging ways for people to experience highs, but the other day, one of us was speaking with a court professional who asked if we had any knowledge or experience in dealing with the abuse of "Bath Salts." Our team member was a little taken aback when they were told people were smoking and ingesting bath salts to get high. We hadn't heard anything on the subject before, so the conversation didn't go much further. When we had a few minutes later on that week, we looked into it.

It turns out "Bath Salts" aren't really bath salts at all, actually, "Bath Salts" a.k.a Meow Meow a.k.a "Plant Food" a.k.a MDVA a.k.a mephedrone is an amphetamine-like substance that produces effects similar to those experienced while taking drugs like MDMA, Cocaine or Methamphetamine. It is made from organic chemicals manufactured in China and India, shipped to the U.S. where they are mixed with inorganic salts and then packaged and sold in local U.S. stores. Mephedrone or MDVP is marketed as bath salts or plant food in order to dodge prosecution under established U.S. laws.

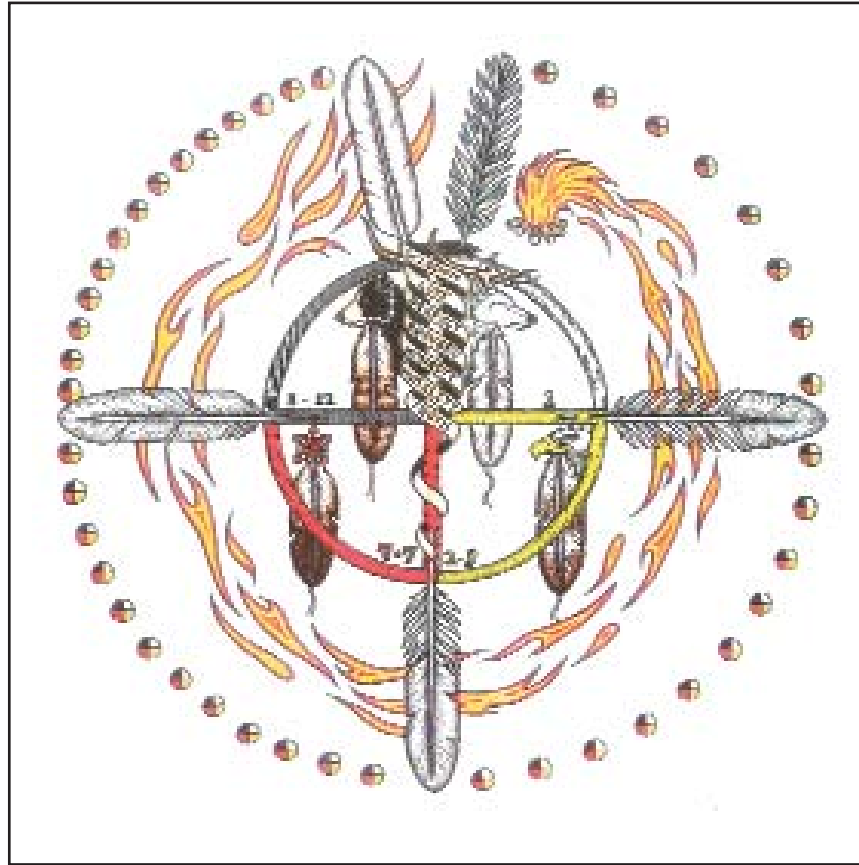
The drug is just the latest in the growing selection of designer drugs produced with synthetic chemicals that are almost exactly the same as the chemicals found in their already widespread "sister drugs" like THC and methamphetamines. Producers are legally tapping into tribal community markets by slightly changing the

properties of the chemicals, thereby, creating new drugs not currently regulated by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Lawmakers have passed the Federal Ana-

sions, hallucinations and paranoia. The drug is considered **highly addictive and DEADLY.**

The DEA has labeled Mephedrone as a drug of concern, and the American Association of Poison Control Centers has reported an exponential increase of incidents, involving the drug reporting with no incidents in 2009, 236 incidents in 2010 and an unbelievable 248 incidents in the first month of 2011 alone. Although several cities and states have passed legislation to ban the drug, it is still legal in most areas of the country.

In recent years, the LTBB Community has taken pre-emptive steps to prepare for the flow of dangerous drugs into our community. With the onset of this new generation of synthetic, largely unregulated,



log Act which was designed to prohibit "Analog" or drugs produced to mimic the properties of already popular and established substances, but producers of Bath Salts sidestep this statute by claiming it is not for human consumption and selling it as bath salts or plant food.

Mephedrone was actually discovered in the late 1920's, but remained an obscure product of academia until 2003 when it reemerged as a recreational drug. Bath Salts are a white powder sold in colorful packages with names like "Ivory Wave," "White Lightning" and "Hurricane Charlie." Studies have shown these products can also contain additives, including hallucinogens, muscle relaxants and anti-depressant drugs. Inhalation, intravenous injection or consumption of the drug reportedly produces euphoria similar to the effects of MDMA use, but can also produce side effects, including an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, risk of heart attack or stroke, chest pain, delu-

party drugs, we have a duty to stay educated and ready to assist community members who are exposed to these drugs. Many drugs our youth and other community members are exposed to today are highly addictive, very dangerous, basically unregulated, easily accessible and have unpredictable effects. Some signs and symptoms to watch for if a family member might be taking this drug are anxiety or a quick heart rate, palpitations, bolt-eyes, confusion, erratic behavior, paranoia, breathing difficulties, emotional outbreaks, unprovoked arguments, nose bleeds, sleeplessness, cold hands and feet and unordinary financial demands. Of course, these symptoms should be observed collectively as many of these indicators are common in many cases.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact the LTBB Adult Drug Court Program at 231-242-1474.

Artwork by Tony Miron.